



The Powerhouse Arts District (The PAD) is an 11½ block area in downtown Jersey City that provides a unique and priceless link to Jersey City's industrial past. The district includes 12 intact warehouses dating from 1873, and is home to the Hudson & Manhattan Railroad Powerhouse (1905) which is currently on the National Register of Historic Places and the Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Company Headquarters Building (1907), a National Historic Landmark. The district also contains Provost Street, one of five remaining cobblestone streets in Jersey City, and the only one with embedded rail.

Over the past two decades, the area developed as a cultural center within Jersey City, with artists, residents, and developers contributing to enliven a once empty industrial area to a "SoHo/DUMBO"-style community, generating foot traffic, events such as the Artists Studio Tour, and the refurbishment of existing warehouse stock into loft apartments.

In October 2004, the Powerhouse Arts District Redevelopment Plan was adopted by unanimous vote of the Municipal Council after a more than decade long process that was both transparent and inclusive of the community. The Plan was implemented to both preserve the historic character and scale of the area as well as encourage the development of an arts and entertainment district. Provisions were included that encouraged the area to be an arts "incubator" for emerging artists as well as to be a home to more established artists. Although the plan has been altered since 2004, up until April of last year, the vision of the plan was kept intact. The vision is defined by five main points:

- Rehabilitation of existing warehouses
- New development that supports the existing scale and fabric of the neighborhood
- Affordable housing for artists
- Percentage of construction costs being donated to the arts
- Active ground floor uses including retail

For various reasons too numerous to state here, the Plan has been challenged despite the fervent wishes and consensus of neighborhood residents and residents of the surrounding communities. In just the past several years, we have lost two warehouse structures to demolition, one of which was occupied artist studio space. The destruction of that building (111 First St.) has resulted in a "diaspora" of artists to all parts of Jersey City. The artist community is a strong and interested party to the plight of our district, and is reflected in all Wards and all neighborhoods in our city.

The Powerhouse Arts District Neighborhood Association (PADNA) was organized to address development as well as quality of life issues that our growing neighborhood faces every day. We are concerned with the growing density in development and the ensuing congestion, traffic, and transportation challenges this poses for all Jersey City residents as well as visitors to our city. We want to ensure that our neighborhood maintains its historic character, open space, and access to other districts and city amenities to support its mission as a cultural destination.

PADNA is supported in its efforts by various other constituencies around the city, from the arts community previously mentioned to neighborhood associations, cultural groups, and historic preservation organizations.

# Jersey City Election 2009 Questionnaire

PADNA has prepared the questionnaire below in order to know your views on issues particular to our neighborhood as well as to understand your ideas should you be elected to office. We have an extensive mailing list of both residents of the PAD and concerned citizens throughout Jersey City. We are asking all Mayoral and Council candidates to answer this questionnaire. We will be publishing your answers to our mailing list. Please submit your responses by email to [communications@padnajc.org](mailto:communications@padnajc.org) by Tuesday, April 28, 2009.

We look forward to receiving your responses and discussing them with you further.

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## General

- How do you see the PAD best contributing to Jersey City?

## Development

- Were you aware that Mayor Healy's administration radically amended the PAD redevelopment plan April, 2008 to accommodate the development goals of national homebuilder Toll Brothers despite overwhelming citizen outcry?
- Are you aware the extent of these amendments as listed below?

Toll is providing in their plan a 26,000sf plaza – 12,000sf of which is the public thoroughfare, Provost Street – and a 550 seat theater instead of the required 400 seat black box theater. For these items, the current City Council's amendments to the PAD Redevelopment Plan allow Toll to do the following:

1. Double their developable square footage - FAR increased from 7 to 13
2. Quadruple the maximum height - increased from 90' to 400'
3. Demolish two historic warehouses, including the A&P Annex building
4. Relocate half of the required 10% affordable housing off-site
5. Eliminate 1/3 of the remaining onsite affordable housing in exchange for "arts space" (which includes the theater – talk about double dipping!).
6. Convert 2/3 of the remaining on-site affordable housing from low-moderate affordable housing to workforce housing (a higher income bracket).
7. Eliminate completely affordable housing for artists.
8. Radically reduce number of live/work type apartments (the type of apartments that attract creative professions and artists) from 100% to about 1% (12 out of a planned 925 units are to be live/work type. The remaining 912 units are to be standard cookie cutter "luxury high-rise" apartments).

- If you were elected to office what would you do about these amendments?
- Currently there are four developments that have had final site plan approval since 2005. They have not broken ground despite there being a major building boom at that time. It is widely supposed that the developers of these sites were waiting to see what Toll Brothers "got" in order to then demand the same for themselves (elimination of affordable housing, greater density and height, demolition of warehouses). How will you address these developers?
- What steps will you take to ensure **the Powerhouse** is maintained and does not sink into further disrepair than it already has? Will you actively lobby for its development during your administration? If so, what steps will you take to secure the funding and consensus so that it is developed?

### Quality of Life

- The Powerhouse Arts District currently has no street cleaning services from the city. In addition, there are many unoccupied warehouses and lots with private owners that are currently covered with trash (around the Butler Brother Building, Manischewitz and Caputo Lots, lots on First Street) and graffiti. Currently we have individual members of our neighborhood organization calling owners to request they clean up; as a group, we organize neighborhood cleanups at least twice a year. Neither of these methods has proved satisfactory in keeping our neighborhood clean. What will you do to rectify these issues?
- After any heavy rain, the neighborhood is filled with the odors that emanate from the combined storm/sanitary sewer. Although the city constantly claims that there is adequate capacity in the system, it is not clear that this is so. An additional problem with the sewers is the existence of hexavalent chromium which was used as fill under the sewer lines along Warren and Bay Streets. What would you do as mayor to address the concerns that the sewer system might not be adequate to support all of the new development, and the further concern that new development in the area will potentially expose, disturb, and spread a dangerous contaminant?

### Open Space

- The Powerhouse Arts District has virtually no public parkland/open space. Do you support open space initiatives? How would you propose to bring more open space in to this district?
- Do you support the use of the triangle adjacent to the Powerhouse as a public park?
- The 6th Street Embankment provides an opportunity to retain elements of Jersey City's industrial past, protect existing historic structures, as well as provide much needed green space and additional transportation alternatives in downtown Jersey City. Do you support the retention of the 6th Street Embankment from demolition? Do you support the Embankment's use as a public park?

### Traffic and Public Transportation

- The **traffic problem** on Marin Boulevard is getting worse and worse. It is very difficult to make a turn onto Marin from the PAD, and crossing the street on foot is almost impossible. New construction slated in our neighborhood will add hundreds if not thousands of new residents with cars, yet the city is saying the traffic level on these streets is not even close to capacity. What will you do to make these streets less crowded and safer?
- Various plans have been proposed to better **link downtown to Liberty State Park**. Many residents downtown have grave concerns about additional vehicular traffic attempting to bypass the Turnpike by using our residential streets as through streets to the Holland Tunnel. Do you support a pedestrian bridge between downtown to Liberty State Park? Do you support a vehicular bridge between downtown and Liberty State Park?
- The commute via **PATH train** has reached an alarming capacity. During business hour commuting, it is routine to wait while train after train passes, unable to absorb even one more body. Various stations are in need of upgrades. Do you agree that the PATH will be unable to support the additional proposed high rise buildings that will be added downtown? How do you propose to absorb the additional residents that will be moving in to downtown and commuting via PATH train?
- What is your position on **the JERSEY CITY MOBILITY 2050 project**? Do you think it will address its stated goal: "to create an action- oriented plan for a citywide transportation network that will be pedestrian friendly and reduce future traffic congestion."